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THE MOTHERS' COMPANION

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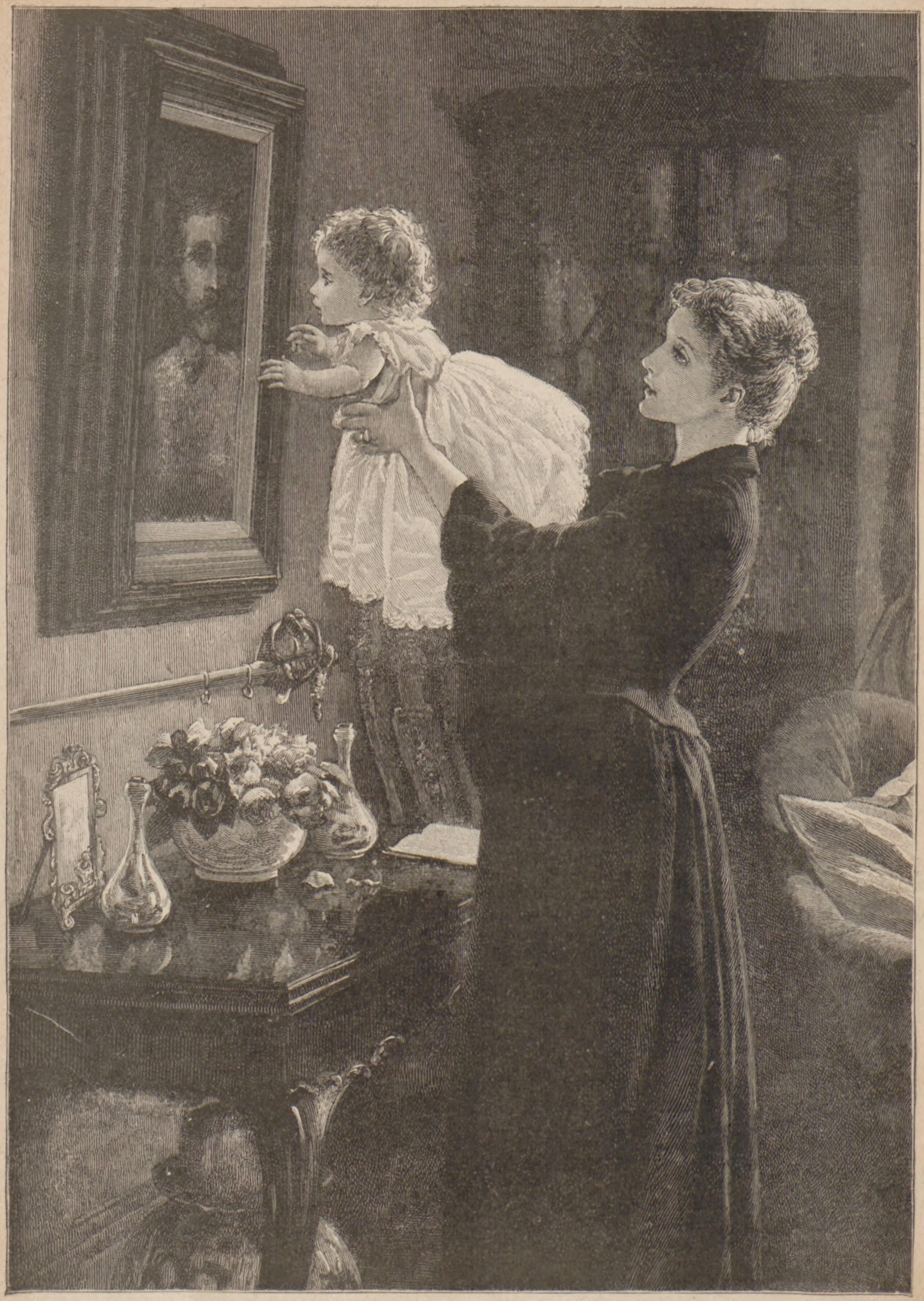

Father's Portrait. (*From the Painting by* MARGARET I. DICKSEE.)

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THE MOTHERS' COMPANION

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BY THE WAY OF THE VALLEY.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL, AUTHOR OF "FOR HONOUR'S SAKE," "WILD BRYONIE," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT WILL SHE DO?

THE year was one day old; a keen east wind swept pitilessly along the bleached and iron-bound roads, as though seeking to purge them of every vestige of sentient life, and it was just beginning to snow. Not with large, feathery flakes, falling in generous multitudes, to robe in soft and spotless down the bare places of the earth—that were winter with a royal hand!—but sifting ice-dust in a niggardly fashion from the hard grey sky, and even this was driven ever unrestingly by the relentless blast; only here and there in sheltered corners could the homeless crystals lie together in peace, and gather whiteness as their wont.

Blue-cheeked and cowering, the few pedestrians in the quiet London suburb of which I am writing, bent their heads, struggling in the teeth of the storm, or were driven before it. Of the latter class was Mr. John Chesney, of the firm of Sharp and Brightmore, electrical engineers, of Gracechurch Street, E.C. And notwithstanding the indisputable fact that even a well-knit, well-set figure of five feet ten inches in height cannot look dignified with coat-tails flapping, hat forcibly induced to remain in its place, and pace visibly accelerated by the assistance of Boreas from behind, it is under such circumstances that I am fain to introduce him to the reader.

Turning the corner of Gordon Street into Stanley Square, his glance instantly darted across to a certain house, No. 15, situated at right angles from where he was walking.

It was a neatly-kept, shabby-genteel residence (no other word will so well describe it), and every one of the drab venetian blinds was drawn down.

"Ah, gone!" he murmured. "Gone. I thought last night that it would not be very long."

Cutting off a corner of the square at his earliest opportunity, the young man crossed over, and going up the three or four entrance steps with a sedate, if not subdued air, quietly let himself into the house with his latch-key.

Placing his umbrella noiselessly in the stand, and hanging up great-coat and hat on a peg above it, he then turned in at the parlour close by, and shut the door behind him.

It was a plain, dull-looking room, furnished with antiquated horsehair chairs and couch. A few dingy wool antimacassars were hanging here and there, and a stuffed owl under a glass shade stood in the window; otherwise the apartment was strikingly devoid of any superfluous trifle likely, from a housekeeper's point of view, to "catch the dust."

The fire was burning merrily, though of too recent kindling to perceptibly affect the atmosphere around, and the table was laid for one.

Mr. Chesney walked straight over to the fireplace as if from habit, and stirred the crackling mass; but that this action was purely mechanical was proved by his neglect to light the gas, though the grey outside gloom struggling through the lowered venetians made twilight in the room. Then he turned away, and fell into an attitude of motionless meditation.

As he stands there on the rug, with hands behind him, and gaze bent absently upon the white table-cloth, one may note how square are his shoulders, how well poised his whole muscular form. And his face is in harmony with

"Marry you! I never thought of that!" *p. 3.*

the rest, a worthy capital to such a pillar. Brow and chin are finely developed and perfectly balanced, indicating both power to conceive noble things and resolution to carry them through. His nose is not remarkable save for the absence of any outward curve which might lead its owner to force his views unwarrantably upon others, while his clear grey eyes, and the mouth almost hidden beneath a brown moustache, are full of quiet strength from which every trace of self-assertiveness is singularly absent.

A tap at the door, and the entrance of a maid with a laden tray.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Chesney," she began, with the easy familiarity of our *fin-de-siècle* "generals," "did you ring?"

He slightly turned his head, and looked at the girl for a moment with the blank expression of one whose thoughts have been recalled from such distant wandering that every present object seems strange, then pushing his hand through his thick, dark hair, he answered, slowly awakening, "Yes! No—at least I think not. But I'm ready."

"The potatoes don't improve by standing this time of year," said the maid, briskly placing two or three dishes on the table. "And your chop was done a quarter of an hour ago. And you're all in the dark, too; I'll light the gas. I s'pose you guessed by the windows that the poor gentleman upstairs was gone?"

"Yes. When was it?"

"About five minutes before twelve. He went off like a lamb at the last. Mrs. Wright and Miss Kendale were both up there with him. And Mrs. Wright hopes you'll excuse the liberty she took in drawing down your blind, but Miss Kendale ordered it—you know her way, Mr. Chesney, always a bit peremptiful-like for such a young lady—and Mrs. Wright didn't like to say her 'No,' poor dear, at such a time, and we knew as you wouldn't wish——"

"Oh dear, no! Quite right, Alice, quite right!" Mr. Chesney interrupted, rather impatiently.

"And will you have your bit of pie hot, Mr. Chesney, or cold?"

"Oh, I don't mind. I don't think I'll have it either way to-day."

"Very well, Mr. Chesney." And the brisk maid whisked up her tray and disappeared.

Left alone, the young man did not attack his dinner with such gusto as might have been expected. When not more than half through, he pushed the plate from him and rang for the dishes to be removed.

Then he settled himself at the table with papers and books, but it was evident from the troubled look with which he ever and anon pushed back his hair, and the arrested attention and listening air that responded to every faintest sound of movement in the room above, that his mind was other where than absorbed in the problems before him.

By-and-by the tea came in, and with it Mrs. Wrigh, the landlady, a motherly but anxious-looking woman.

She made a point of seeing each of her lodgers at least once a day, but that was usually at the removal of the supper cloth. Her present appearance was contrary to precedent, and attributable only to the sad event of that morning.

"How does she seem?" asked Mr. Chesney, as though the thoughts of everyone in the house must necessarily be occupied as were his own.

But Mrs. Wright understood.

"Quite as well as you could expect, sir," she responded, "and I may say better. But, la, Mr. Chesney, what she'll do I don't know, for she's no more fit to be left in the world by herself than a baby!"

Mr. Chesney reached out his hand for the butter-knife in silence, his broad brow flushing slightly the while. Then, "She is very young," he said.

"And not only that," responded the landlady, "but she has some of the queerest notions. Said not an hour ago, poor dear!—one can't help smiling, though it's so sad—that she thought her poor father had better be buried 'in Westminster Abbey, or wherever is the best'! And as to having any idea of the value of money——"

"Would she feel able to see me by-and-by, I wonder?" queried Mr. Chesney.

"That's what I was thinking, sir. Her poor pa did, in a sort of way, look to you when he found his end so near, and they don't seem to have a soul belonging to them in England. Perhaps she'd take notice of anything you might say, though she's got a way of her own, for all she's so young and foolish, that just shuts me up. She's been crying most of the afternoon, but she seems a deal better now."

"I'll go up to her as soon as I have finished," Mr. Chesney said.

Hastily swallowing one cup of tea and a mouthful or two of bread-and-butter—though few would have guessed from this nervous haste the tumult of varied feelings that was thrilling every fibre of his being—Mr. Chesney stepped up the baize-covered stairs to the apartment usually styled the drawing-room, and tapped at the door.

A low-toned "Come in" bidding him enter, he found himself in the presence of the one woman who, young and slight and childish as she was, had all unconsciously ascended the throne of his strong heart.

As she sat alone in that oddly-furnished room—a rich Eastern rug or two, several pieces of costly statuary, and the delicate, crested cup and saucer on the table contrasting strangely with a threadbare carpet and faded green repp chair seats—she looked very small and lonely. Her golden head drooped pensively, her dark fringed eyelids were heavy with weeping, and the childish mouth, with its short, proud upper lip, quivered with appealing tremulousness. John Chesney had never seen Miss Kendale in so tender a mood before, and he would fain have gathered her up in his arms and comforted her like a baby.

However, while he hesitated to find appropriate words in which to express the sympathy with which his heart seemed bursting, the girl turned towards him, and said, with extraordinary composure and dignity—

"Sit down, Mr. Chesney, please. I am glad you have come up. There are so many things I should like to discuss with you. Mrs. Wright is a worthy creature, but she does not seem to understand."

Her visitor's impulse towards tender consolation was at once repressed with a firm hand, and he replied as quietly, "I am at your service, Miss Kendale."

Thereupon the little creature—she could not have been more than nineteen—commenced to explain how that dear papa *must* be buried in Westminster Abbey, or, at least, in St. Paul's Churchyard (!), that no item of grandeur or richness must on any account be omitted from his funeral, and everything possible must be done to honour him as befitted "the grandson of an earl."

The girl spoke with an amount of determination which made such expressions of desire the more embarrassing, and the way she was evidently struggling with her tears gave John Chesney the heart-ache.

Very gently he endeavoured to show her the impossibility of her wishes being fulfilled, and then as delicately as might be he touched upon the unavoidable subject of money, and the expense that all such displays of respect for the departed would necessarily entail.

"I have plenty of money," Miss Kendale informed him. "The last instalment of poor papa's annuity—a hundred and twenty pounds a year he had, you know—was paid just after Christmas, and he told me last night that there is more than eighteen pounds of it left, even after paying Mrs. Wright and the doctor."

"But—pardon me for entering upon such details at such a time, Miss Kendale—you will need money for yourself, to support you until—until——"

He hesitated, having no idea of what the girl's future intentions might be.

"But I shall soon earn some. I hope to be quite independent, Mr. Chesney."

It would have been most ludicrous, had it not been so sad. That childish form, those tiny milk-white hands, that almost unfathomable ignorance of the world and of London life in particular!

"Have you formed any definite plan?" Mr. Chesney ventured to ask.

"No, oh no! But I know you will do all you can to help me," answered the girl, her large, violet-grey eyes looking up at him in absolute trust. "I'm willing to do anything, and I'm very quick to learn. Of course, I mean," she added, "I'm willing to do anything suitable to my station. I can never forget that my mother was an Elmer of Elmersley, and papa the grandson of an earl."

At such words as these from any other lips, John Chesney's would have curled in honest scorn, but now a passionate pity swallowed up every other feeling, and his eyes dimmed with tears.

CHAPTER II.

MARRIED IN BLACK.

A FUNERAL and a wedding at 15, Stanley Square, within a month! The neighbours were surprised, they thought it very odd. But it did not appear more strange to anyone than to the bridal pair themselves.

Three months earlier nothing would have seemed less likely to John Chesney than that the first month of the new year would see him a married man. And as to Jasmine Kendale, dreaming away her petted girlhood amid the flowers and poetry and sunshine of a southern island, that she could ever, not to speak of so short a time thence, find herself the wife of a prosaic Londoner, was about the last thing that could have entered her imagination.

Yet here they were, and it had all come about so naturally as to seem almost inevitable.

John Chesney had loved the girl at first sight. When driven from their island home by the news of a great monetary loss, the Kendales, arriving in London, had engaged the first lodging which they came across, and that was at Mrs. Wright's. They intended at the time that their sojourn here should be but temporary, Mr. Kendale, despite the years of semi-invalidism which had been the primary cause of his residence abroad, indulging the hope that he might be able in the heart of the world's industries to obtain some employment, suited to his mental abilities, and not beyond his physical strength. But the blow which had fallen, followed by the varied trials connected with a complete change in his mode of life, proved too much for him, and before the pair had been a month in their new home, Mr. Kendale knew **himself** for certain to be a dying man.

Then it was that he eagerly welcomed the modestly proffered friendship of their fellow-lodger. He was going away; his Jasmine, his cherished flower, would be left helpless, and utterly alone! In one hour—we might almost say, in one moment—rushed upon him with overwhelming force a realisation of the terrible mistake he had made in her bringing up. Isolated from his few remaining relatives by circumstances arising from his own eccentricities of character, he had endeavoured to rear Jasmine, the love-legacy of an idolised wife, wholly for his own pleasure, keeping from her all knowledge of the world and its ways, and, as far as possible, shutting out from her every interest that had not its source in himself. And now he was going to leave her, alone in the great city, with all her carefully preserved ignorance, her cherished inexperience, her fostered self-conceit, her cultivated pride! He could not leave her to the Father of the fatherless, for the orphan's God was to him but an empty name; but in his anguish of anxiety for her, clutching like a drowning man at the nearest straw, he seized upon John Chesney, a plebeian whom a few short weeks before, he would have deemed unworthy to kiss the hem of his daughter's garment, and, discovering the young man's dawning passion, almost besought him to make her his wife.

And now, if Chesney really wished to befriend the girl, this seemed the only thing to do. As to putting her in the way of obtaining any kind of employment for her own support, it needed but a single conversation with her on the subject to convince a practical person of the futility of any such project. But to approach her on tenderer grounds was even more difficult. On his side there was no obstacle. He truly loved the girl; he was in a position, through years of bachelor economy, to establish and maintain a home of simple comfort, and he fondly dreamed, knowing little of Jasmine's character, and less of her singular training, that she would prove a docile pupil, and a perfect wife.

But she could never be wooed like other girls, that was evident. She would not understand it. He must go plainly to the point at once. Thus it came about that on the evening after the funeral, when, in talking about her future, Jasmine again alluded to her father's confidence that Mr. Chesney would befriend her, the latter nervously hinted at what he felt sure had been Mr. Kendale's wishes concerning them.

At first, as he had feared, the girl did not comprehend the drift of his remarks, so he had bluntly to ask her, then and there, if she would marry him.

"Marry you!" she echoed, opening wide her dark-blue eyes. "I never thought of that!"

The startling proposal, however, seemed only to surprise the girl, and her lover was immensely relieved to find no trace of displeasure in look or voice.

"Of course, dear, you did not," he answered, with what he felt seemed paternal more than lover-like gentleness. "But I have been thinking of it, Jasmine—you won't be vexed with me for calling you by that sweet name?—it is always in my thoughts—almost ever since the first time I saw you. I love you dearly, little one, and I think I could make you happy. It should be the whole aim of my life to try."

"I know you are good," said Jasmine, in a tone that was full of simple faith. "And—and you are not poor."

"No! I am not rich, far from it; but I think, if God

grant me health and no less success than has hitherto been my lot, that I shall be able to provide a cosy little home. I am now getting about two hundred pounds a year."

"Two hundred!" cried Jasmine. "Why, then, you are rich! We never had so much as that."

For, shrinking from the idea of her ethereal feminine mind being debased by contact with the sordid facts of every-day life, Mr. Kendale had studiously kept all such details from her knowledge, and she really thought that the annuity with the amount of which she had lately become acquainted, represented their whole income. As to what their loss had actually been her father had never explained, and she had never troubled to inquire.

"I hate to speak of this at such a time," said Mr. Chesney, presently breaking in upon the reverie into which the girl, upon the utterance of those last words, had fallen. Her face was working, and he feared a fresh outburst of grief. "But the circumstances are so peculiar. I want—oh, you don't know how I want to have a right to comfort you, poor little lonely bird! And you don't say 'No,' do you, Jasmine?"

"You say *he* would have liked it?" she chokingly whispered.

"I am certain of it," he returned, with convincing assurance in his eager words.

"Then it is sure to be all right. And I don't think I mind."

John Chesney drew the girl towards him for one long, tender kiss, but she turned her flushing face away, and he did not press her more.

"God willing, it *shall* be all right, now and for ever," he murmured.

It was a strange betrothal, and a stranger wedding. The ceremony was hastened, because Miss Kendale, when all expenses were paid, had absolutely nothing to live upon—it never occurred to her to dispose of any of those art treasures which still were hers, and John could not have proposed such a thing to save his life—and there seemed no reason why it should be deferred. She was married in her mourning frock, with no one present but Mrs. Wright and their two selves. And earnestly, from the depths of a soul both tender and true, the bridegroom prayed for the blessing of God upon their union.

But Mrs. Wright, then and many a time after, thinking of that black dress, shook her head and sighed.

(*To be continued.*)

A NEW-YEAR PROMISE.

"Thou shalt not be forgotten of Me."—Isaiah xliv. 21.

THE changes of the coming days
Thy vision cannot see,
The secrets of the hidden ways,
The road that waits for thee.
But whatsoe'er shall be thy lot
Throughout the unknown year,
Thy Father shall forget thee not—
Oh, wherefore shouldst thou fear?

Thy name is precious to My heart,
Thy life is in My care,
My kindness never shall depart,
My grace is everywhere.
I choose for thee the path untrod,
And change but works My will;
Belovèd, trust thy Lord, thy God,
Mine Eye shall guide thee still.

Thine utmost need, thine every prayer
In My remembrance dwell;
My help each moment thou shalt share,
And prove that all is well.
Beneath My blessing joy's sweet flowers
Shall gleam in glory bright,
And Love shall crown thy sorrow-hours
With everlasting light.

Oh, trustful, thankful, heav'nward come,
And put all doubts away!
The New Year bears thee, from thy Home,
My promise day by day.
Lean on thy Shepherd and thy Friend,
Whose mercy changeth not—
My child, I love thee to the end!
Thou shalt not be forgot.

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

SOME BABIES I HAVE MET.

BY A. NOLDE DADDY.

BLESS them! Are they not just the daintiest, sweetest, most beautiful treasures with which our Heavenly Father has entrusted us? Where is the true woman, mother or spinster, who is not enraptured with the mere sight of a tender babe? Though, for that matter, there are few real men whose eyes do not light up with affectionate interest when Baby is on view. And what a study the dear mites are, too! "Babies!" exclaimed a mother of some experience to me once, "there are not two just alike in the wide world. They are men and women in miniature, with all the tastes and tempers of grown-up persons."

I doubted the accuracy of this opinion when I heard it; but since then, having made a slight study of many a "bundle of infantile loveliness," I firmly believe in it. Of course, the differences and characteristics are not so pronounced, but there they are. In proof, I proceed to jot down a few impressions of some Babies I have met—my own and other people's.

Shall I commence with the GOOD BABY? Yes, I will. He is such a pet! Look at him as he sits sturdily erect in his cosy crib. Eyes wide, wide open, taking in everything around, and quick to note the slightest movement. What a noble little face, set in a frame of tiny golden curls! Who could not run and kiss the dear fellow's rosy mouth? His plump, dimpled arms are at rest, with fists made into a soft ball. Just a scrap of a coloured wool shoe peeps out below his snow-white frock. Such a picture he is!

But his goodness is not confined to looks. My Good Baby is one in nature. He is perpetually crowing with delight. He evidently means to have a really good time.

PAPA'S PET.

The look you get from him seems to say, "Mum-a, Dad-a, Everybody, I am only recently arrived, all among friends, and I am going to enjoy myself. Let me crow, and laugh, and be happy." And he does. He is just a morsel of human sweetness and light, and his gentle temper, bright eyes, and joyous little ways make him a precious treasure and delight to all.

Our next friend is not quite so interesting. I will call her the PASSIVE BABY. To most men, passiveness is the one characteristic of all babies—at least, in the daytime. A baby cannot talk politics, you see, or indulge in a little grumbling aloud. However, Miss Passive *is* disappointing. No use putting her on show, whatever your weakness in this direction. Place her in the cradle, she accepts it without a murmur. Dandle her up and down in your arms, and kluck-ck-ck-ck till the roof of your mouth is dry; she is imperturbed. Squeeze her little cheeks between your finger and thumb gently, squeaking like a canary a dozen times as you do so; she is coldly indifferent. No, she cannot see any fun in amusing others. Wait a few years, Mother, and no doubt she will become a quiet, thoughtful girl, and perhaps a deep-thinking, strong woman.

"BOO! BOO! WHAT'S THAT?"

Let us change the study. Our next subject shall be the AGGRESSIVE BABY. Do *you* know him, gentle reader? He is what the good mother generally terms "a bonny boy." Vitality is in him at its full. You cannot keep *him* still—not that you need do so. Take him into your arms, and immediately he has your front locks in a desperate clutch, and gives you a beaming smile as he tugs away. Or sometimes he takes a fancy to your nose, which means that that member must remain in fast custody till his lordship pleases to release it. A little later you seat him at table in his high chair, when away go saucer and cup—you have provided *tin* ones!—and "Puss-ee" has the benefit of every scrap of "buppa." Yes, he's "a regular Turk," but a splendid one nevertheless. What if he *does* plunge and wriggle like an eel when held for any purpose! What if he will crawl up or down the stairs alone unless you watch him! What if you have to save him from a thousand dangers every day! He's a grand fellow, and the pride of Father's heart.

AS CROSS AS TWO STICKS.

INCLINED TO BE TEARFUL.

But what about his contrast—the SHY BABY? you may here ask. Well, I have met the Shy Baby, and a dear little creature she is, though I cannot admit that I admire her infantile modesty. I have before my mind's eye a small, silver-haired specimen just now. Look! she is in Mamma's arms, and I steal up to her quite unconcernedly. Ah, she has caught my glance. Down burrows the little head into the sheltering bosom—nose, eyes, all. I coax, exhaust my best baby language, use all the endearing names to be thought of, gently smoothe the silken-adorned head, and stroke the rounded arms—no, all in vain. Miss Shy is not to be drawn out. I must leave her severely alone, as forcing will only bring tears. How vexing! Such prettiness, but no responsiveness. The Shy Baby is difficult to deal with. Her over-sensitiveness is so apt to develop into selfishness or morbid self-consciousness by-and-by. Carefully must the young plant be tended. Its frailty needs patient watching and training.

VERY SHY!

NOT TO BE DISTURBED.

How shall I depict another tiny personage whom I have had the "pleasure" of meeting? Let us at once call it the CRYING BABY. True, I am scarcely captivated with this example — Papas especially *may* be, I am not! Of course, my typical infant is not the dear little soul afflicted bodily, but the thus early cross-grained nurseling, who apparently seems only happy when miserable. In the dead of night it can be heard, and, as the poet sings, "With no language but a cry." "There, there, petty," you soothingly whisper. "Pre-cious mite, is it hungry, and has mamma's ickle petty-hungry?" No! it is not and is not in pain not a pin pricking it, is not anything amiss. —and to all appearance No, by day or night, it seems to

RATHER AGGRESSIVE!

A GOOD CRAWL!

enjoy a mild fit of screaming. Pacifying it is very like putting water in a sieve. Sincerely do I pity the poor mother who has such a charge. And yet, strange to say, one of the sweetest babes I have ever known started life in this way, and dared not be looked at unless wailing and sobbing were desired. But, enough.

Far more pleasant is it to turn to the FUNNY BABY. Not exactly in appearance, my friend; in ways, looks, sounds. Master F. B., when I interviewed him, seemed to be feasting on a huge joke on his own account. His beads of eyes were full of sparkle, his mouth half open, showing his coral-like gums, his fat cheeks in smiling pleats. I am not sour-tempered myself, so joined in the unexplained fun. But suddenly he stopped, eyed me with a twinkle, then gazed at the ceiling, and laughingly boo-ed; that done, he glanced down and saw his rosy big-toe—nibbled at it, bit it too hard, and—laughed. In his lap lay his rubber "comforter"—picking it up, with tremendous glee he raised and flung it away as far as he could! Then his fingers came in contact with a stray draw-string. Away he tugged at it, in spite of results, smiling all the time. And so on, and so on. The Funny Baby, as everyone knows, only lives to indulge in queer little tricks, and laugh at you when expostulating. He is a happy, happy pet, and a perfect gleam of sunshine in this too often grey-toned world.

"Ah," I fancy I can hear some mother exclaim as I conclude, "I love the babes, whatever their nature. Still, your Good Baby I like best in the list, but I suppose even he is not *always* good. Say, have you met the IDEAL BABY?" Yes, mother, I have, and *you* may know it—that Holy Babe who was cradled outside the inn at Bethlehem. I joy to picture the Blessed Saviour thus, with the loving, wonder-filled Mary bending over Him. What a Babe! what a mother! Sweet yet pathetic is the record which tells how that Babe grew to boyhood, and then to manhood, and finally accomplished His all-glorious purpose. Mother! with all your trials with the little ones, their care and their training, look to Him, and verily you shall find help and strength for the noble, sacred duties of true motherhood.

PRACTICAL PAPERS ON EVERY-DAY NURSING.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," "ABOUT OUR FOOD," ETC.

I.—THE NURSE.

SICKNESS has come, and you are preparing to do battle with it. If the illness is slight and you have no need to call in the doctor, then you may look upon yourself as nurse and doctor combined; but if you have to seek the aid of a medical man, remember one thing to begin with, and never lose sight of it—he is the head, you are only the hands. It is your duty, therefore, to obey his instructions implicitly, and to the very best of your ability. The finest conception of a picture that painter ever had, would be worthless if his hands could not carry out the ideas of his mind. So the cleverest doctor that ever lived could not save a patient if the nurse neglected her duty.

But besides careful obedience to the doctor's orders, you owe him yet another duty which is often forgotten. You should do your utmost to make your patient trust in him. Faith in a medical man goes a long way towards curing many complaints, and even if it should happen that you personally do not think the treatment wise, it is your duty, so long as the doctor has charge of the case, not to suggest doubts about it to the patient.

Remember when you take up your position in a sick-room that the patient is stricken down. Whether it be a grown person or a child, you will have need of untiring *patience*. "Don't hit a man when he is down," says the rough and ready proverb, and it would be well for us all to bear it in mind when we come to tend our sick folk. Weakness and pain are hard to endure, remember. You are well and strong, therefore endeavour to bear patiently with the little whims and tempers of the invalid, and do not add another weight to the heavy cross already laid on him.

But while you are patient, be *firm*. Medicine must be taken; treatment, however painful, must be gone through; the doctor's instructions must all be carried out, and the sooner the patient understands that the better. And the only way to do all that without hurting anyone, is to be very *gentle*. Thus we get a little trinity of virtues which ought to rule in the sick-room, and make it as happy as a place of trial can be—patience, firmness, gentleness. Without them, a nurse is worthless; with them, she can manage the most unruly patient.

When you take up your position in the sick-room, what should you wear?

It would be better, perhaps, in a series of this sort to answer that question in a negative form. Do not wear a long dress which will collect dust and dirt as you move about; do not wear starched petticoats which will crackle at every step. Do not wear a number of rings, which will be a source of discomfort to the patient when you are washing or dressing him; and don't have your hair loose and frizzy so that it tickles his face when you bend over him. Wear something sweet, and clean, and bright-looking. It is a mistake to banish pretty colours from the sick-room.

Provide yourself with warm slippers, and a dressing gown for the night work, and do not bundle yourself up in a shawl, which always looks untidy in the house, and has a knack of catching in everything.

If possible, you should have a tepid or warm bath every day while you are in the sick-room. There is enough impurity coming from the patient's skin without your adding to it. If you cannot manage the bath, wring out a rough

towel in soap and water, and rub yourself quickly from top to toe.

A few drops of hartshorn in the water will remove all faint odours from perspiration, and we have Miss Nightingale's authority for saying that more good can be got from a cupful of hot water with hard rubbing than from a big cold bath without rubbing.

CONDY'S FLUID, SANITAS, GLYCERINE.—Keep your hands as nice as you can. Wash them frequently in a weak solution of Condy or Sanitas, and rub them well every night with glycerine; they will thus be always sweet and clean.

REGULARITY.—Life in the sick-room should be regulated by clock-work. "Every four hours," for instance, must be every four hours. When the doctor writes his prescription he knows how long a certain drug requires to take effect on the patient, and how long it will retain its hold over him. If you then give the doses at an interval of three, or four, or five just as you happen to remember them, the medicine and the patient do not have a fair chance.

So with the nourishment which has to be given. If you ask your patient whether he would like so and so, you are pretty sure to get a flat, if not a peevish negative. Therefore don't discuss food at all, either with or before him, but at the proper time, and at regular intervals, take to his bedside whatever he ought to have, arranged as nicely as possible. A clean cloth should be put on the tray if you are only taking half a teacupful of beef tea.

In giving medicine, if you value your own peace of mind and the life of the patient, *read the label of every bottle before you pour out the dose.* Oh, how I wish those words could be written in letters of fire on the wall of every sick-room! (Not where the patient could see them, of course, though!) One shudders to think of the numbers of lives that have been sacrificed for want of this precaution, and that not by amateur nurses alone, but by women who have been trained, and to whose charge the sick people have been handed over without a fear. Not many months have passed since a poor boy of twelve was given a dose of carbolic acid instead of cough mixture by a trained nurse, who confessed that she had poured out the dose without looking at the bottle. Once more, then, mothers, and sisters, and wives, whoever you may be, read the label of every bottle before you use anything out of it.

BE EXACT as well as regular, which means that no one should be in a sick-room with however slight a case without having a pencil and paper at hand. The best memory that ever was could not give a perfectly exact account of everything that has passed between the doctor's visits, therefore take my advice, and if it is only a case of measles which you are nursing without a doctor at all, keep your notes regularly.

Put down the temperature of the patient morning and evening, taking it at the same hour each day—I'll tell you how presently.

As each meal is taken from the bedside, note down exactly how much he took of it, whether he ate it with relish, or whether he did it because you said he must. That reminds me that you should always take away the food when the patient has done with it. Never mind if it is only half gone, there's nothing that takes the edge off one's appetite more than the constant sight of food. The confectioners know this when they let their shop-boys eat as much as ever they like for the first fortnight.

Note, too, whether the food and medicine seem to agree with the patient, whether he settles quietly after them, or whether he seems uneasy, troubled with wind or sickness.

So with sleep. Keep an account of how much sleep he has had, and of what kind it was. Did he sleep peacefully or did he groan or seem distressed in any way? A good nurse needs to be all eyes and ears, and that's why we have two of those members, and only one tongue. Please to make a note of that, all mothers who read these papers. You have had some straight hints from me before, so I am not afraid of your misunderstanding me. I write for myself as well as for you. On the whole we *talk* too much. The sick-room is a place where we can learn to use our eyes and ears more, and our tongues less.

Don't run away with the idea that WHISPERING isn't talking. Oh dear! how whispered conversations do aggravate a patient! According to all accounts, I myself am a very patient patient (and I have had a good deal of sickness in my time), but I can confess to you that I have felt sometimes as if I must throw a book at the head of my nurse to stop that whispered confab, half in, half out of the door. Talk in your natural voice, avoiding causeless noise on the one hand, and irritating buzzing on the other. If you want to discuss the patient's case, go out of the room to do it. You can't imagine, unless you have been through it, how one lies and wonders what the people are saying. I have been all through my own death and burial half a dozen times over during those whispered conferences.

Finally, if you want to give the doctor, the patient, and yourself a fair chance, beware of neighbours' prescriptions. Everyone has some special remedy for everything, and everybody's remedy differs from his friend's. Why, no two people that you may ask at random agree about the meaning of the old saw, "Feed a cold, starve a fever."

If you once begin to follow neighbours' prescriptions you will turn your patient's stomach into a medicine chest. If he is strong, Nature will pull him through, in spite of you; but if he is weakly, you will kill him.

Don't fly off at a tangent and imagine that I mean you are to take no person's advice. If I were to advocate that, I should be condemning myself, for of course I am hoping that you will take *mine!* What I mean is, that if you have a doctor, you should carry out his directions implicitly, and not follow the suggestions of anyone else, however kindly meant, without asking him first.

If you have no doctor, and are nursing a simple case of every-day ailments, as any sensible mother can often do, you should make up your mind whose opinion amongst your friends you consider most sound and practical, and steadily shut your ears to the many prescriptions the kindest of folks are ready to give.

One other caution. Nursing is like knitting—it doesn't begin with the same letter, I know, but it will some day when the phoneticists have their way—no two people do it exactly alike. Still, the nurse must have her rest; so be careful, when you leave your post, to write down exactly what is to be done during your absence, and mind that you do not stay away longer than you have provided for.

"All that about the nurse!" some one exclaims. "Well, I think the best way is to keep out of the sick-room, if all that is necessary to take charge of it."

Not a bit of it, my friend. It sounds a great deal, but twenty-four hours in the sick-room will show you the need of each one of the hints that I have given you. You would find them out for yourself just as well as I could tell you, but then you would have to buy your experience, and time is not money, but *life* to our sick folk.

MATCH-BOX MAKING AT HOME.

BY CLEMENTINA BLACK.

THE trade of making match-boxes at home is, I trust, a dying one; but as, alas! there are still hundreds of women and children engaged in this occupation, I should like to tell the readers of the MOTHERS' COMPANION a little about the hardships connected with the work. A couple of years or so back there was quite a nest of match-box makers in the "Old Nichol Street" district, close to Shoreditch Church, London. This little patch of slums had the character of being as poor, as vicious, and as unsanitary as any in the metropolis.

The district is melancholy enough, but not so frightfully depressing as a group of little sordid, modern East-end streets, in which may be found another colony of box-makers. In these streets live numbers of home workers, all in the deepest poverty. Report attributes a very bad character indeed to the inhabitants of this square quarter of a mile; but personally I met with nothing to confirm it in the two visits of several hours which I made, and I have known highly respectable working women who have lived for years in this area, and were very unwilling to move. All the women admitted me readily to their rooms—for the most part painfully squalid abodes—showed me their work, and answered my questions fully, civilly, and almost eagerly, and not one of them begged.

A Match-Box Maker at Work.

Thousands of match-boxes pass in, unmade, every week, to little streets in Bethnal Green and Shoreditch, and pass out again, completed. The women fetch out from the factory, or the middle-woman's, strips of notched wood, packets of coloured paper and sand paper, and printed wrappers; they carry back large, but light bundles of boxes, tied up in packets of two dozen. Inside their rooms the boxes, made and unmade, and half made, cover the floor, and fill up the lack of furniture. I have seen a room containing only an old bedstead in the very last stage of dirt and dilapidation, a table, and two deal boxes for seats. The floor and the window-sill were rosy with magenta match-boxes, while everything else, including the boards of the floor, the woodwork of the room and the coverings of the bed, was of the dark grey of ingrained dust and dirt. But the woman who lived here was quite cheerful; it was a sunny day, and her boxes could be dried without need of a fire. She worked while she talked, as such women always do, and indeed must do, for with them it is a grim truth that "time is money."

At first sight, it is a pretty enough spectacle to see a match-box made; one motion of the hand bends into shape the notched frame of the case, another surrounds it with the ready-pasted strip of printed wrapper, which by long practice is fitted instantly without a wrinkle, then in sand paper or the phosphorus paper, pasted ready beforehand, is applied and pressed on so that it sticks fast. A pretty high average of neatness and finish is demanded by most employers, and readers who will pass their match-boxes in review will seldom find a wrinkle or a loose corner of paper. The finished case is thrown upon the floor; the long narrow strip which is to form the frame of the drawer is laid upon the bright strip of ready-pasted paper, then bent together and joined by an overlapping bit of the paper; the edges of paper below are bent flat, the ready-cut bottom is dropped in and pressed down, and before the fingers are withdrawn they fold down the upper edges of the paper inside the top. Now the drawer, too, is finished and cast on the floor to dry.

All this, besides the preliminary pasting of wrapper, coloured paper, and sand paper, had to be done 144 times

A Good Day's Work.

for 2¼d.—and even this is not all, for every drawer and case has to be fitted together and the packets tied up with hemp. Nor is the work done then, for paste has to be made before it can be used, and boxes when they are ready have to be carried to the factory. Let any reader, however deft, however nimble-fingered, consider how many hundred times in a day he or she could manage to perform all these minute operations. But practice gives speed, especially when stimulated by the risk of starvation.

The real rate of pay for any work must be determined not by the price per piece as it seems to the outsider, but by the number of pieces that can be turned out by a skilled hand in an hour or a day; and this is a point difficult to arrive at, because most home workers work irregular hours and more or less intermittently. A married woman with children will tell you that she works from six o'clock till midnight, but when you come to examine more closely you find that out of that time some is employed in clothing and feeding the children. On the other hand, it is more than likely that the children help in the work. It is not possible to measure the pay of such a woman. Another difficulty is that many women have no clear idea how many gross they make in a day, or how much money they take in a week. It is evident that only in the case of a single woman working at the trade as a trade, not as a supplement, can the true figures be arrived at. I had been told that some girls were for a little time on show at the People's Palace, making match-boxes in the presence of the public, and that they made at the rate of twelve gross a day. Allowing 2d. per day for necessary deductions for fire, paste, and hemp, this gives 12s. 6d. a week—a poor pittance enough, but considerably above the wage earned by hundreds of girls in East-end factories at jam-making, sweet-making, tailoring, rope-making, and such-like industries.

While sitting watching the quick fingers of one young unmarried woman I visited, I began to calculate. Eight gross at 2¼d.: 1s. 6d. per day, minus about 2½d. for paste, hemp and

Taking the Boxes to the Factory.

firing—1s. 3½d. per day. How many hours of work? Five o'clock to nine o'clock—sixteen hours, from which an hour perhaps might be deducted for meals; another half-hour would be taken up in going to the factory, but that must be reckoned as part of her working day. 1s. 3½d. for fifteen hours. And this for an exceptionally quick hand, able to get as much work as she could do, and never kept waiting! It is clear enough that if this was about the best pay earned (and I think that those who best know the women working in this trade would confirm my opinion that it was) the ordinary rank and file of match-box makers cannot, at a rate of 2¼d. per gross, be earning above ¾d. an hour.

A worker who makes match-boxes by hand inside the factory has not to provide the fire for drying, the hemp for tying, or the paste. Nor has she in any instance, I believe, to do the "boxing up," that is, to slide the drawer into its case. She would work probably fifty-six hours a week; and is paid 2½d. instead of 2¼d. per gross. A girl as quick as she whom I have quoted above, would probably under these circumstances make a gross per hour, and would then—supposing she were never kept waiting for work—earn 11s. 7d. per week. Of course, very few workers do, as a matter of fact, work so quickly, and I have never, myself, known an instance of a factory worker of this kind whose weekly wage averaged 11s.

This state of things has long existed in the poorer parts of London, and in the interest of the workers generally it is much to be desired that the industry should be transferred—as it must sooner or later be—to the factory "hand," who even now, in spite of the competition from without, earns as much or more per gross as the home worker, while she does less work to each gross and is free from the deductions necessitated by home work. The home worker is driven by poverty not only to work, in her own expressive phrase, "all the hours that God sends her,' but also, as far as she can, to keep her children working with her. Home work involves child-work, and without child-work it could not be so ill-paid as it is. It offers a direct incentive to parents to keep their children from school; it wastes time, labour, and money; time and labour in carrying to and fro, in "boxing-up"—for every box must be re-opened to put in the matches—and in tying up the parcels; time and money in the purchase of hemp and the provision of innumerable separate fires and boilings of paste. Finally, it does not provide a wage at which a woman can house, clothe, and feed herself healthily—to say nothing of comfort. Such a form of work cannot survive, and the sooner it dies the better.

The directors of the Salvation Army, with their usual keen eye to the business possibilities, as well as the religious possibilities of their undertakings, perceived the sympathetic attitude of the public mind on this subject, and established a match-making factory with the avowed object of paying better prices to the boxmakers. Fourpence a gross is the price paid for large boxes, and 3¼d. for a smaller size, the matches being sold at the same price as those for which 2½d. or 2¼d. are given. Of course, these prices are better than a uniform rate of 2½d., but I cannot help thinking that there is still room for some shrewd philanthropist to "go one better," without losing money.

Let us hope that better times await the poor match-box maker. Much may be done among themselves to improve their condition as to wages, yet much more might be done by an earnest, philanthropic public desirous of practically carrying out towards them the urgent commands of Christ, the great Philanthropist, to help and care for the poor and neglected wherever found.

Hints for Busy Housewives.

DAMPNESS.—A box filled with lime and placed on a shelf in a pantry or cupboard and frequently renewed will absorb dampness and help to keep the air in the closet dry and sweet.

To Prolong the Wear of Carpet.—Shrunken, half-worn bed-blankets, past using on a bed, make good pads to put under carpets. They will be a great saving in the wear.

A Good Cement for China.—Mix with a strong solution of gum arabic and water enough plaster of Paris to make a thick paste. Apply this with a brush to the broken edges and unite.

Haricot Beans.—Haricot beans, if well and properly cooked, form an excellent vegetable for youth. Mothers should know this fact; for it is difficult at certain seasons of the year to procure anything but potatoes. A variety (potatoes always forming the staple vegetable) is most wholesome and nourishing.

The Value of a Drop of Oil.—Every housekeeper knows how annoying it is to have the hinges of the doors squeak, and the locks and bolts refuse to move unless great force be used. Use the "oiled feather.' Many do not remember that a few drops of oil will, as a rule, remedy these annoyances. First spread a newspaper on that part of the floor over which the hinges swing. Then oil the hinges thoroughly, and swing the door backwards and forwards until it moves without noise. Wipe the hinges, but let the paper remain for a few hours, to guard against the possible dripping of oil. For locks and bolts, guard the floor in the same manner. Oil them thoroughly, working them until they will move with ease.

A Basket Cradle.—An account of a novel cradle used by a mother who is especially bright in thinking of convenient ways to tend her babies and keep them well and happy will be of interest. She bought an oblong clothes-basket, and laid a horse-hair pillow in the bottom for a bed, and a small flat pillow at the head. When the baby was fed it was laid in the basket. The best feature of the basket cradle is its portability, for it can be carried by the handles into any room where the mother must be at work; or it may be taken out of doors and set down in some corner to give the little occupant a breath of pure air, then into the house and put safely on a bed in a darkened room for nap-time. By the use of the basket the babies become accustomed to going to sleep without rocking, and by the time they are too old to sleep in or be satisfied with life in a basket, they are content to be put in a crib for a nap or for the night's sleep.

Stewed Prunes.—Stewed prunes is an admirable remedy for costiveness. The manner of stewing them is as follows:—Put a pound of prunes in a brown jar, add two tablespoonfuls of *raw* sugar, then cover the prunes and the sugar with cold water; place them in the oven, and let them stew for four hours. A child should every morning eat half a dozen or a dozen of them, taking care that he does not swallow the stones.

Stopping Chimneys.—Don't stop up your chimneys! No greater mistake can be made. The use of a chimney is two-fold—first, to carry off the smoke; and secondly (which is of quite as much importance), to ventilate the room, by carrying off the impure air, loaded as it is with carbonic acid gas—the refuse of respiration. The chimney should never, either winter or summer, be allowed for one moment to be stopped. Pure air in life is one of the best doctors. In bedrooms the window should be partly opened at night.—*Dr. Chavasse.*

*** "The Head Nurse" and "Rustic Chivalry" are the titles of two beautiful Coloured Pictures given away with the January numbers of THE INFANTS' MAGAZINE and THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND. Mothers who desire to provide their children with thoroughly pure, wholesome literature, cannot do better than secure these well-known periodicals, which can be had of all booksellers, price 1d. monthly.

THE MASTER'S MESSAGES TO WOMEN.

BY MRS. CHARLOTTE SKINNER.

No. I.—To a Disappointed Woman.

WHEN the Master was upon the earth, many of His most beautiful sayings were addressed directly to women. It would seem as though, painfully conscious of the wrongs and indignities man had heaped upon her, the Lord strove to grant to woman a richer share of His tender graciousness, thus by heaven's smiles to atone for earth's frowns. It was for a woman that, we read, He purposely went out of His way, in order to meet her and bless her. Just one woman, a woman that others shunned. Only for the sake of two women do we read that He ever condescended to answer the criticisms of scoffers. "Neither do I condemn thee," was His tender forgiving utterance to one who had to bear, as women such as she have had to continue to bear for eighteen centuries, the full shame of the sin of two. To a woman he first appeared as He moved in resurrection form along the pathway of Joseph's garden, and to women was first granted the commission to tell the story of His triumph.

These sweet messages, given to our sisters in those olden days, given in such a markedly direct manner, and preserved to us during so many centuries, when man still continued his oppression, ought we not to treasure, with loyal, holy rapture?

As we seek to gather them together, and catch their tender tones—saying to ourselves the while, "*All our very own*"—may everyone record a vow that He who showed such heavenly, courtly chivalry shall never, through fault of ours, regret becoming WOMAN'S EMANCIPATOR!

Let the first message to be considered be that

To a Disappointed Woman.

When I was a little girl, one sunny day, a brown halfpenny lay in my hand, and a bright idea in my head. I determined to rush down the street and exchange my halfpenny for one of those gay-coloured india-rubber balloons the rag-man was selling. The idea was put into execution, and I became the happy possessor of the coveted ball. What happy dreams I had of the delightful games I should have! Up and up in the sunny air I meant to throw it, and everyone in the home should come out into the garden and enjoy the luxury of catching my ball. The garden was reached, the ball thrown up, caught, and then, first in wonder, then in tears, I watched it grow smaller and smaller, till it lay in my hand nothing but a dirty-looking bit of skin. Many a bright joy have I dreamt about since then, only to find it wither. We all have our disappointments, and they are ever with us.

Disappointments imply three things—(1) Something desired, (2) something that has failed, (3) something that has brought sorrow. Three words will describe the whole—*sunshine*, *shadow*, *sadness*.

There came to the Master one day, as He passed by the margin of Galilee's blue waters, *a disappointed woman*. For twelve long years she had borne disappointment after disappointment, and now, penniless, full of pain, wearied and sad with "dropping buckets into empty wells," a new hope had sprung up in her breast. But who could tell if disappointment was not once more to smite? Who could tell if she would ever succeed in getting through that packed mass of humanity surrounding the Master?

Praise God! she has succeeded, and more than succeeded, for the shadows of many disappointments have left her face—sunshine has chased them away, and in the midst of the crowd she hears a whispered voice, and looking up from where she knelt into that face whose features she can never forget, the words fall upon her, as dew upon a wounded plant, the Master's message, "*Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace*" (Luke viii. 48).

It was a fourfold message. The first spoke of *Relationship*—"Daughter." "He called me '*daughter*.'" There was once a poor woman who had a very rich friend, and this poor woman never worried about her circumstances, or feared what the future might bring. She just did the very best she could, saying, "What I cannot manage my friend will do for me." Many a young wife and mother, when household matters have gone wrong, or when, through inexperience, she has not been able to make ends meet, gets inspiration from the fact, "Well, things are not all black, there's always mother willing to help me." On that thought she rests. It is a reserve fund of happiness.

Just as people put by money for a rainy day, we have a comfort in store for a day of disappointment. Our Saviour is a far better friend to have than any mother.

The second part spoke of *Sympathy*. "Be of good comfort." "He sympathises with me." If He had not done so He would have taken no notice of her. When people are suffering from disappointment they often go to certain doctors. Some go to *Dr. Pleasure*, and he says, "Go to the seaside and have a holiday." Some go to *Dr. Hardness*, and his advice is, "Take no notice of it." Then some go to *Dr. Tears*, and he says, "Have a good cry, and then you'll feel better." All these are poor sorts of cures. What the soul needs is gracious sympathy and timely help.

In a railway carriage a man was once sitting with his leg placed upon the seat. The official happening to see him, said, "Those cushions were not made for you to put your dirty boots on." As soon as the guard was gone the man put his leg up again, remarking, "He has never broken his leg in two places, or I'm sure he would not be so sharp with me."

Our dear Master's remedy for disappointments is largely made up of sympathy. He knows us so well, for He was often disappointed Himself when on earth, and is often disappointed now. His sympathy is not only founded on knowledge, but also on *power*. Some earthly friends sympathise with us in our disappointments, but cannot help. Christ gives help along with sympathy.

So the third beautiful part is *Safety*. "Thy faith hath saved thee." We all know what it is to have faith in father, mother, or husband; we trust them, and the Master wishes us to have the same faith in Him—to believe He would not allow anything to happen to us but for our real good. Do you not see, then, how faith does away with disappointments? A little girl was once taken by her father into a warehouse, where he had promised to buy her a doll. There were some penny ones quite close to the door, and being the first she had seen, there came the wish to possess one. But the father said, "No." It would have been very natural for that child to be greatly disappointed. But the father took her into a large room farther on, and bought her "a beauty."

We cannot always understand why God allows disappointments to come, but we have just to trust Him,

knowing that in His wonderful way He will take perfect care of us.

One day when Handel gave a concert there was a great number of empty seats. During an interval, some friends went to sympathise with him about the small attendance; but his answer was, "Never mind, de music vil sound de petter." He spoke very bad English, but very good sense. Our Master can make our disappointments increase and sweeten the music of our lives.

The fourth part of the message speaks of *Assurance.* "Go in peace." We have no need to be troubled at all. "But surely you do get disappointed sometimes?" Oh, yes, disappointments *come* to us, and very often, just at first, they cause great pain. But when we remember the loving message, with its sweet assurance, our hearts grow light again, and the black wings unfold themselves and fly away. "Go in peace." What kind of peace? The peace that settles over the stagnant pool? No! "*My* peace I give unto you," the peace such as the angels know, the peace that turns the sigh of disappointment into the song of delight.

"THE LEAST OF THESE."

SHE had little of earthly beauty,
  She had less of earthly lore;
She climbed by a path so narrow,
  Such wearisome burdens bore!
And she came with heart a-tremble
  To the warder at heaven's door,

And said, "There were hearts of heroes,
  "There were hands of wondrous might,
I had only my little children,
  That called to me day and night;
I could only soothe their sorrows,
  Their childish hearts make light."

And she bowed her head in silence,
  And she hid her face in shame;
When, out from a blaze of glory,
  A form majestic came;
And sweeter than all heaven's music,
  Lo, some one called her name!

"Dear heart! that hath self forgotten,
  That never its own has sought,
Who keepeth the weak from falling,
  To the King hath jewels brought.
Lo, what thou hast done for the children
  For the Lord Himself was wrought!"

MRS. WARNER'S POLICY.

BY FLORENCE E. BURCH.

"AH, Mrs. Gurney! Come to wish me a happy New Year, are you? That's right; step inside."

A cordial grasp of the hand accompanied these words, and before Mrs. Gurney could get out a syllable she was inside and the door shut to.

"That's right!" repeated Mrs. Warner, cheerily. "Now sit ye down there," she added, guiding her visitor to the easy-chair. "I'll have the kettle boiling whilst you're making up your mind, and we'll have a cosy cup of tea. It's just my time."

Mrs. Gurney, of course, felt bound to make some sort of objection about monopolising the most comfortable seat; but Mrs. Warner promising to let it stand as an excuse to occupy the goodman's elbow-chair, she submitted. So Mrs. Warner at once stood Sukey over, and commenced bustling about to put the loaf and butter on the table.

Mrs. Gurney leant back, watching her.

She was a listless, weary-looking woman, with a pale, lined face—quite a contrast to comfortable, smooth-browed Mrs. Warner, with her bright eyes and happy mouth.

Life becomes sad drudgery when there is no music in the heart, and Mrs. Gurney knew no brighter music than dirges for departed ease, or melancholy strains about the days to come.

Truth to tell, life had not used her very well upon the whole; and some folks have a way of leaving all unwritten save their chapter of ill-usages.

That chapter Mrs. Gurney had written very legibly, beyond a doubt. You could read it in every line of her face, and you listened to it in every tone of her voice.

To look at her, as she lay back in Mrs. Warner's easy-chair, watching her brisk movements and answering her chirpy talk, you would have guessed that hers had been about as hard and sad as mortal lot could be.

To look at Mrs. Warner, on the contrary, you would probably have doubted whether she had ever known a trouble in her life.

But it does not do to judge upon appearances. There is nothing better than listening while people talk to give you an insight into their minds.

"The sun has given us a right cheery smile for New Year's Day," said Mrs. Warner, as she set the tea-pot on the table and took her place. Then she bowed her head, and gave thanks for the food.

"Hardly up before it's down, though, these miserable winter days," said Mrs. Gurney, gloomily, forgetting to say "amen."

Mrs. Warner handed her some tea.

"To be sure, these days are short for work," said she. "Paraffin oil isn't like daylight, either, to get on by. But we're over the worst now, anyhow. Every day'll lengthen out a bit."

Mrs. Gurney could not but admit the truth of this.

"Only you no sooner get them lengthening out," said she, "than you know they're going to begin shortening again."

Mrs. Warner looked across with a quizzical expression in her face. "Well!" exclaimed she, "that's good."

"You can't tell me it isn't true," said Mrs. Gurney, with dismal defiance, as if to challenge Mrs. Warner to make better of such a hopeless state of affairs.

Mrs. Warner might have said a hundred different things, but she said none of them. She was not the one to ridicule,

"Mrs. Gurney stopped with her cup half-way to her lips."

for ridicule invariably raises a barrier of dislike; and it's little indeed a helping hand can do across a barrier of that kind. She answered in a playful tone.

"You begin at the wrong end," said she. "Why not start from midsummer?"

"There's nothing but the short days coming then," objected Mrs. Gurney, gloomily.

"Nay!" said Mrs. Warner. "On your own showing it's just the other way about; if you've the short days to think of when you start from New Year's Day, you've got the long days when you start from midsummer."

She put her cup down as she said this.

Mrs. Gurney stopped with hers up half-way to her lips, and shook her head, gazing out before her with that ill-used, weary look.

Such talk was very well, she seemed to think, for those who had smooth lives.

It was easier to take cheerful views of things, admitted Mrs. Warner, when all went right.

"But some keep their eyes so fixed upon their troubles," added she, "that they see nothing else."

"Mine began so early," said Mrs. Gurney, dolefully.

"I've had small chance of seeing anything else. I was only six-and-twenty when my poor mother died. Two years and three months from my wedding day, it was. I've never known much happiness since then. Some people feel these things so much. My father was just like me. It completely broke him down. He made his home with me, poor man, from that day till he died. Ah! Mrs. Warner, none but those who have gone through it know what it is to lose a mother."

A tender look came over Mrs. Warner's face.

"*I* know," said she, "for I lost *my* dear mother"—she didn't use that word "poor"—"when I was scarcely turned fifteen; and I'd no father, either, to care for, or be cared for by. I remember how I used to grieve. It seemed as if there could be no more happiness for *me*. But God brought it to my mind that I was wrong to dwell upon the *dark* side of her end. 'Think of her many triumphs over all her weakness and suffering,' something seemed to say to me—and she *did* triumph, Mrs. Gurney, every day, and many times a day, bless her; and isn't there a crown of life for those that overcome? I never thought of her as my *poor* mother after that; for only those who never gain a victory over self, are *poor*. Instead, I set myself to follow in her steps.

"I dared not think much of her sufferings," she went on, as Mrs. Gurney sipped her tea in silence, "they were so cruel at the last; and—it's no use saying different—she shouldn't have suffered so if *I* had had the ordering of things. But what do I, or any of us know about what's best! God alone knows that.

"What am I about, though?" cried she, suddenly, reaching for the loaf. "A pretty hostess you'll think me!

"A hard spell we had, too, one time when my good man got out of work," she went on, getting up to fetch a knife. "'Twas uphill work to right ourselves; but there was the bright side to it, for we loved each other better for that struggle, hand in hand. And when my baby died—my *first*—I wouldn't think about its coffin and my empty heart. I just thought about its happy little face and my own gladness when God trusted it to me, until my heart was full of thanks to Him; and I'm trusting Him to give it back to me some day.

"Then there's my Dan—my sailor boy that's far away at sea. Folks ask me often when the wind blows, 'Weren't you terrified for him?' And I won't say I don't lie and *think* of him. But I say, 'Lord, Thou hast him in the hollow of Thy hand'; and I thank Him that my Dan is a good boy. For there are worse things we can hear about our lads than that they're drowned at sea. But come, I am forgetting again. A bit of bread and butter, Mrs. Gurney. Yet stop! It shan't be bread and butter this cold afternoon, but a nice hot piece of buttered toast, for New Year's Day.

"Maybe," she went on, as she turned the bread about, "you've had more to bear than I. But depend upon it, trouble's only made the worse by picking out the darkest side to dwell upon. Think of the hopeful side of everything is *my* policy, and I believe that I see twice the sunshine some folks do."

She was going on; but suddenly the door unlatched, and in peeped a head. One hungry sniff of that delicious browning bread, a glad cry of surprise, and in burst Dan—the sailor lad!

* * * * * *

"Well," observed Dan, presently, holding his mother at arm's length, "you haven't wished me a happy New Year yet; and perhaps you wouldn't think it too much trouble to make *me* a bit of toast."

So Mrs. Warner laughed, and dried her eyes, and Dan said "How do you do?" to Mrs. Gurney, who wanted to withdraw at once, and leave the mother with her boy. But neither Dan nor Mrs. Warner would hear of that; and Mrs. Gurney stayed an hour listening to Dan's yarns.

"Well," said Mrs. Warner, when at length she stood upon the threshold, lamp in hand, whilst Dan stepped out to open the gate, "God grant it be a real good year for all of us. And don't forget my policy."

And Mrs. Gurney went home through the frosty night to think of it.

A CHAPTER OF "DON'T" FOR MOTHERS.

DON'T forget that you brought your children into the world without their knowledge or consent. You have no right to embitter the life you have thus thrust upon them. I have known parents to make absolute slaves of their children, compelling almost constant attendance, under the popular delusion that young limbs are never tired; and, like the old slave-master, giving nothing in return but food and clothes.

2. Don't laugh at and deride your children's hobbies. Remember how much brighter life has seemed to you when you could realise some cherished dream, and treat them accordingly.

3. Don't forget that youth needs amusement. Your children have not only bodies, but minds. Rest for the body and amusement for the mind are demands of nature which too many parents ignore. If you do not provide for your children healthful and sufficient amusement, then thank God for His mercy on you if your children do not take to dangerous or wicked pleasures when they are older.

4. Don't forget that your children are beginning life, while you, perhaps, are ending it. Give them the benefit of your experience, but don't expect that your experience will serve them in place of an experience of their own.

5. Don't be impatient with your children when they doubt your estimate of the world's allurements. Remember, it is you who have tested these things, not they. You did not see with your parents' eyes, neither should you expect your children to see with your eyes.

6. Don't demand respect of your children, or endeavour to enforce it by your authority. Respect is paid not to those who demand, but to those who deserve it.

7. Don't neglect your children's friends. Invite them to your house. Show your children that their friends are your friends, and your children's friends will be such as you approve.

8. Don't be jealous of your children's friends. If you make your society delightful to your children, they will always prefer you to any other companion. If your child prefers anyone else to you, stop and ponder whether you have not compelled him to seek elsewhere the companionship, love, and sympathy he ought to have found in you.

9. Don't be afraid to let your children see your love for

them. Let a child feel that no matter where he goes, or what he does—no matter whether friends forsake or foes slander him, his parent's love and trust will always follow him—and that child is not only safe for all time, but the thought of this love will shine out like a lamp in a dark place, cheering and strengthening him against all evils.

10. Don't forget that the great Father of all has had infinite trouble with you. You have been just as refractory, ungrateful, and disobedient as any child you have. Let this thought temper your anger, and make you wise to direct a complex human soul.

THE COMING YEAR.

To get the most out of the coming year, we must put the most into it. And we put the most into it by living in a spirit of earnestness, doing with our might what our hands find to do, not trifling with the golden hours but receiving each as a precious gift from God. Only such earnest purpose makes the day a blessing, ensures progress from good to better, and causes us to live in eternity while we are in time.

They are the happiest who value every hour, who put good work into it, who do not procrastinate, who do everything now, and do it as well as it can be done. Each of us has been created for a special work; each is an essential part of the great whole; and, as the soul is unfolded, and we are developed more and more, we shall find ourselves here for a special mission. Let us not think lightly of our destiny.

If we would get the most good out of the coming year, let us take every opportunity which comes of loving God by helping others, and if we mean to do all we can, we shall succeed whether we know it or not. Those who think they are not doing anything, often do a great deal by being something. The pure in heart not only see God, but show God to others. The artist paints a saint with a visible halo round his head or an aureole around his form. But an invisible aureole attends the innocent child, and goes with the pure-minded boy and girl; and an influence emanates unconsciously from the ripened virtue and love of a devoted mother who has been staunch in the cause of right, till goodness has in her become consolidated into character.

When we put all the good we can into the year, we shall get all the good we may out of the year. Jesus praised the woman who did a slight deed of tender love, saying, "She hath done what she could." And Wordsworth says that it is "The little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love" which make up the largest portion of a good man's life. Let us do all we can and be all we can for truth and right and duty, and in this way we shall get the most out of the months and days of the coming year.

"HE LOVES TO ANSWER PRAYER."

A CLERGYMAN was once visiting a loving mother, and found it difficult to gain her attemtion. She had a little infant just able to creep about the room, and he saw that her eyes were following the little one along its way, and her thoughts were occupied with it.

He told her that she reminded him of a passage of Scripture: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9). Then he added, "Your eyes run to and fro through this room, that you may help your little one the moment it requires your aid; so our Father in heaven is ever watching to succour those that walk uprightly in His fear."

Is not this a bright and happy thought to begin the New Year with? You may go to God just as your children come to you for sympathy and help. He is always watching that He may succour, and comfort, and guide, and guard you.

He loves to answer Prayer!

TO EVERY MOTHER.

Be careful with the little souls
  Committed to your care,
The little souls that God hath made
  So innocently fair,
Oh, guardian of their purity,
  A solemn charge you bear.

Be gentle with the little hearts
  That nestle to your own,
And guard and govern them aright
  By tenderness alone,
Awhile ye lead their early thoughts
  Unto the heav'nly throne.

Be loving with the little ones,
  And let their youthful days,
In years to come, hold memories
  Of "Mother's" kindly ways;
Such tender thoughts prompt noble deeds,
  Ambitious of her praise.

MAUD MADDICK.

THE VENTILATION OF BEDROOMS.

THE following quotation from Marion Harland's well-known work, "Eve's Daughters," places the evils of ill-ventilated sleeping apartments before us in so graphic and truthful a light, that every thoughtful reader must be impressed by its perusal. She says:

"Everyone does not know, or knowing, does not act up to the belief, that exhalations from the body are dirt, and that dirt of all kinds (if we except dry earth) is malodorous. The clinging humours thrown off by the pores, sleeping and waking, may be dislodged in part while still warm. If suffered to soak into the fabric in cooling, they become offensive to sight and smell, and the fruitful source of disease.

"The body actually loses weight during sleep, and the escaping effluvia hang like a viewless vapour in the air, steep linen, and reek in blankets. If they were never so faintly coloured, the day would break dimly on your waking eyes, and could you condense them, you would behold a mass of corrupt matter from which you would shrink in loathing unutterable. Yet you swallow and inhale this with every word and breath while you remain in an unventilated sleeping apartment!

"Pile on clean blankets, shaken and cooled every morning, if you sleep cold, and set a screen between yourself and a direct draught, or place a curtain across the window if a casement, but be sure to secure by means of raised or lowered sashes a bounteous current of pure outer air during the night, to replenish the lung supply, and to sweep out noisome exudations."

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

WE are warned that there will soon be some violent changes in fashion, but at present we do not see anything very striking or fresh, except in some of the ugly extremes, which we are all anxious to avoid. Tight and semi-tight jackets of three-quarter length seem likely to take the place of the loose capes so long in vogue. Flat plain and fancy braid trimmings are generally used, and a shoulder cape or frill at the neck put on under the collar is the most fashionable finish. Unlike the capes of last season, those now in use lie flatter—indeed, many are made quite fitting over the shoulders.

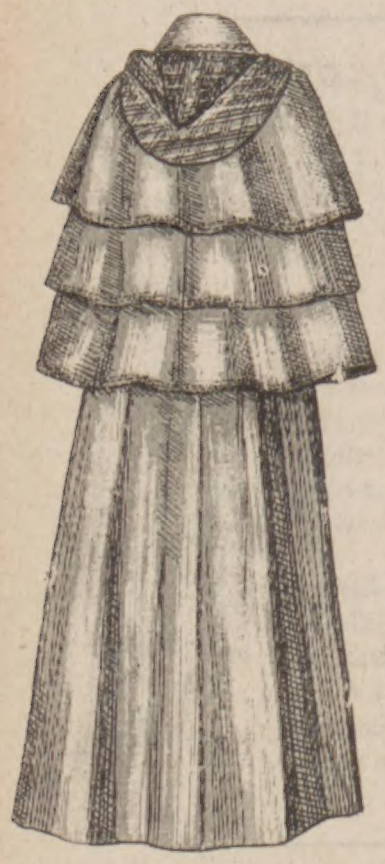

Fig 1.

One very handsome jacket we have lately seen was, however, of quite another order. It was called the Empire style, and had a yoke and sleeves of velvet, trimmed with beaded guipure. The lower part of the mantle was made of rich silk, and four broad satin ribbons fastened on with rosettes were set on at the end of the yoke and hung over the silk. Some shade of brown is the prevailing colour for all outdoor garments, russet, tobacco, and cinnamon being most in favour.

Long cloaks reaching to the bottom of the dress are always in demand at this season of the year. Many of those now shown have a complete under-mantle with one or more short capes, or frills. These capes are frequently made on a fitting yoke, trimmed with many rows of narrow braid.

Figured and plain materials seem equally fashionable for long cloaks; but for jackets, plain Melton cloth is generally used, browns and greys being the favourite shades.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 1 shows a lady's mantle, the under part of which consists of a skirt only. This is a very convenient way to make a mantle, and there seems no need for the under part to have body and sleeves when a tight-fitting cape is used, such as is shown in our illustration. A mixture in tweed or cheviot cloth is better for a long cloak than a plain colour, as it will not be so likely to show any mud stains that may be contracted. The skirt is set into a band the size of the waist, and a good wrap over must be allowed for, or the cloak will not close over nicely at the bottom. The three-fold cape is completed with a hood, and can be worn without the under-skirt. If a very thick material is used, some of our readers may like to make a single or double cape, instead of the three-fold one, which would be rather heavy made in a stout cloth. The hood can be dispensed with if desired, in which case the top cape would be made a little shorter. The cloak will take about four yards of double-width stuff.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 2 illustrates a young lady's dress, made with a double skirt, and trimmed with ribbon velvet, about an inch wide. The material used is a plain surface cloth in myrtle-green colour. The fulness of the body is all drawn towards the centre, and is set into a band. The dress fastens at the back. A frill about six inches deep finishes the neck, and is edged with velvet, as is also the pointed band used at the waist. A lace frill can also be worn at the neck for best occasions. The fulness of the sleeve falls towards the elbow, all the new sleeves having this tendency.

Fig. 3 is a neat little pattern, suitable for a girl from five to ten years of age. A soft material of a fine twill pattern can be used, and the waist-band and cuff are made of a striped material, placed on the cross. Two narrow flounces trim the skirt, which is lined throughout. The body is made over a fitting lining, and the fulness is gathered so as to form three tiny puffs at the neck, a heading about an inch wide being left. The full puff at the top of the sleeve has a narrow frill, where it joins on to the plain deep cuff.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 4 shows a lady's dress, made in rough woollen stuff, and trimmed with crape for deep mourning. The pattern, however, will do equally well for a coloured dress, when silk or velvet should be used for trimming. Whipcord cloth in all colours is being sold very reasonably, and will make economical and useful dresses. The dress bodice shown in our illustration has a pointed plastron, lined with sateen, and a roll of trimming on either side. The collar consists of three flat capes of different lengths, the upper one being finished with a stand-up collar. The waist-band hooks under a rosette of crape or velvet. The skirt is bell-shaped, and is gathered into the band at the back, and lined throughout with linenette.

Flat patterns can be supplied, 6½d. each. Address, "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.